

# Socialist Review

**Aotearoa/New Zealand**

For a socialist and democratic alternative

Issue 11 Winter 2002 \$2



resistance  
&  
reaction

palestine resists • alliance meltdown • teachers' dispute • france • india/pakistan

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## Appeal – We're almost there...

We've had a great response to the appeal we put out in our last issue, which means we've been able to buy most of the computer equipment needed to keep *Socialist Review* in production. Hopefully this will be the last issue laid out on a ten year old Macintosh!

We would like to thank the following people for their generous donations:

**Miranda, Andrew, Rebecca, Gerry, Ramsey**

At the time we went to press, we were just \$200 short of the target for buying the last – and most expensive – item, a new laser printer.

Remember, all donations over \$20 receive a free copy of the next issue.

If you'd like to help, please send donations to "SR Donations," P O Box 11207, Wellington, and make cheques out to "ISO".

**Regards,  
Editorial Committee**

*Palestine's struggle:  
pages 3-7*



**We welcome your letters: Please send to  
either of the addresses below**



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# War on the Palestinians

By Corey Oakley

The last century was one of unimaginable barbarity. War, genocide and suffering were inflicted on people across the globe to ensure the profits and the power of the world's rulers.

The death and destruction inflicted on the Palestinians in recent months show that if the likes of Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon get their way, this century is going to be just as bad.

In Jenin, hundreds were massacred by the Israeli military. One Western witness said:

"If there is a hell on earth, it is here in Jenin. The destruction is beyond words... Our host family was cornered in half a room for three days. They had to relieve themselves in one pot. IDF [Israeli Defence Force] soldiers, meanwhile, defecated all over their home – on their beds, in their cooking pots, on their bread, and also on their copy of the Koran.

"One woman with an asthmatic son watched her husband get stripped and then shot by the IDF. Later, he was run over by a tank. She found one of his shoes this morning, on her way to look for her son's medicine in the rubble of her demolished home."

Bodies were buried in mass graves, or simply left rotting in the streets as the Israelis refused to allow medical and humanitarian aid into the refugee camp.

In Nablus, Apache helicopters and F-16 jets attacked from the sky, as tanks tried to overrun the makeshift barricades blocking them access to Palestinian streets. In the Kalandiya refugee camp a woman held the dead body of her son, a child torn apart by an explosive "dum-dum" bullet. Crying and pointing at her other sons, she said "I did not hate Israel, nor did my sons. I don't want to hate them. I don't want my sons to kill their sons. Help us. You Europeans, you world, you elsewhere."

But the world hasn't helped. The UN inquiry into the Jenin massacre has been blocked by Israel with the backing of the US – in exchange for the release of Arafat



*Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers terrorise a Palestinian family*

from the siege of his Ramallah compound. According to the US administration, investigating the massacre had become "a distraction from progress towards peace."

The Israelis, under the monstrous hypocrisy of "destroying terrorist infrastructure" have been able to impose a reign of terror on the Palestinian people, systematically destroying the infrastructure of people's lives – water supplies, homes, electricity grids, factories and the basic necessities of life.

With American weapons and American backing, Sharon has inflicted a severe defeat on the Intifada. Even the illegal imprisonment and deportation of American citizens – peace activists who attempted to enter the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem – did not raise a protest from George Bush.

Despite the outpouring of rage throughout the world at Israel's actions, the US administration stood firmly behind Sharon.

This is nothing new. Israel has long been a central plank in America's domination of the region. Funded militarily to the tune of more than US\$3 billion each year, its

role is to impose the agenda of the US on the region by whatever means necessary.

In 1948, when Israel was established, this meant killing or driving from their homes hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Ariel Sharon cut his teeth in the Irgun, responsible for such atrocities as the massacre of hundreds of Palestinian villagers in Deir Yassin.

In the 1967 war, it meant devastating the Egyptian and Syrian armies, taking over what are now the Occupied Territories. It was this that convinced the US that Israel was a loyal ally, one that was willing to "discipline" any Arab regimes that threatened its oil interests.

These oil interests are vital to the continued domination of US capitalism. As the vice chairman of oil multinational Chevron put it:

"The Middle East represents the heartbeat of our industry. And its significance will only grow with time. Two thirds of the world's proved oil reserves and one third of its gas reserves lie in the Middle East."

The US ensures its domination of the region by on the one hand supporting

repressive Arab regimes who will do its bidding, and on the other funding the "Iron Fist" of Israel. In 1998 (during the "peace process") the US State Department granted export licences for anti-personnel riot control chemicals worth US\$3.5 million, plus 28,539,400 rounds of ammunition and 12,768 military guns to Israel.

It is true that the US and Israel have not always agreed on tactics, at least openly. As far back as 1948, US oil giants consciously modelled themselves as "pro-Arab," while the US government went about funding the Zionist terror gangs expelling Palestinians from their land.

And through the "peace process" of the 1990s, the US mouthed the rhetoric of compromise, at the same time watching happily as Israeli settlements continued to grow across the West Bank.

But today the US is leaving no doubt as to which side it is on. As Bush waxed lyrical about the Saudi "peace plan" in April, Israeli troops were ploughing into Hebron. In a sick echo of the Nazi Kristallnacht attacks on Jews in 1938, Israeli settlers were scrawling graffiti on the city's shops – a Star of David with the words "Arabs out" written beneath.

The US administration, far from condemning such barbarities, calls on Arafat to "renounce terror," while receiving Ariel Sharon – the biggest butcher in the region – as a guest of state.

Israel is in violation of dozens of UN resolutions, is the only nuclear power in the region, and has again and again perpetrated massive violations of human rights and international law. And yet, according to George Bush, Sharon is "a man of peace."

At the same time, the US is gearing up for a full scale invasion of Iraq, on the flimsy pretext that it won't allow UN weapons inspectors into the country – something the Americans say they would never do. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld describes Iraq as a "world class vicious dictatorship," while praising Israel for its willingness to negotiate!

Some sections of the US administration seemed worried that the conflict in the Occupied Territories would make an invasion of Iraq harder. It is clear now the consensus in Washington is that if the "Palestinian problem" can be buried under the wheels of Israeli tanks, then so much the better. ■

# Suicide bombers

Today, in the West Bank and Gaza, hundreds of Palestinian youths daily declare their willingness to die fighting for their people's liberation. The fighters of the Intifada use rocks and guns and grenades, and also, tragically, suicide bombings.

Media commentators – perfectly understanding of the huge suicide rates in countries like New Zealand – are incredulous at the monstrous idea that people would blow themselves up for a cause.

But many young Palestinians feel they have nothing to fight with but their own bodies. They have been betrayed, not only by the oily promises of the UN, but by the policies of their own leaders who preach restraint in the face of settlements and massacres, who promise peace but only deliver subjugation.

In the wake of Jenin, Palestinians shook their fists at Israel and the world, and said we will keep fighting, the suicide bombers will keep coming, you will never beat us.

But the tragedy is that the Palestinians do have a choice. As the Israeli troops massacred

civilians and fighters alike in Jenin, the maligned "Arab street" erupted. Millions across the Middle East demonstrated and struck in solidarity with the Palestinians.

For those who support the Palestinian struggle – that is, for people opposed to imperialism and oppression – it is not enough to shudder at suicide bombings. We have to fight, however we can, for an alternative to that strategy of impotence.

That is, for a strategy that bases itself on mass resistance, on the struggle of workers and the oppressed in the Arab countries and around the world – an alternative that can defeat Israel and its imperialist backers. This is no pipedream. The resilience of the Palestinians who despite everything keep fighting is only equalled by the enduring support that every instance of that resistance sparks. And it is the Arab working class which holds in its hands the very resources that make the Middle East a constant source of conflict.

Only by looking to the power and solidarity of Arab workers can ordinary Palestinians be won to the idea that their heroism and determination can result, not in the desperate impotence of another suicide bombing, but in a liberated Palestine. ■

Corey Oakley



(Top) Palestinians carry a body from the ruins of Jenin  
(Above) Victims of the Israeli massacre at Jenin

There's no contradiction at all between opposing anti-Semitic bigotry against Jews and opposing the political project of Zionism – the construction and defence of a Jewish state on hijacked land in Palestine.

For one thing, a significant number of Jews – including some Israeli citizens – have criticised Israel's war on Palestinians. Obviously, the hundreds of Israeli reservists who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories aren't anti-Semites.

But it's no more correct to suspect anti-Semitism when Palestinians oppose Israel. This isn't to say that there's no anti-Semitism in the Arab world. There is – just as there is bigotry toward Jews elsewhere in the world, including among racists who nevertheless support Israel because they hate Arabs even more.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government relies on the support of far right Israeli politicians who routinely refer to Palestinians as "vermin" and "animals" – just as the Nazis regarded Jews as subhuman. And from the 1948 war to found the Israeli state to the proposal to settle the whole of the Occupied Territories, Israel has always been associated with the policy of expelling Palestinians – frighteningly similar to the Nazi idea of clearing Jews from Europe to provide "Lebensraum" (living space) for the German people.

## Is it anti-Semitic to oppose Israel?

There is a tragic irony in the fact that Israel is today carrying out the same kind of racist persecution that European Jews fled from in the 1930s and 1940s. But given the historical legacy of Zionism, this isn't a surprise.

The Zionist movement has always believed that anti-Semitism can't be overcome – and therefore Jews need their own ethnically pure homeland. The founders of Zionism considered the rise of Nazism an opportunity – to fulfil their dream of organising a mass Jewish exodus to Palestine.

But in so doing, Zionism "transformed Jews from a persecuted minority into an oppressing majority," according to an article published in the 1970s by the now defunct Israeli Socialist Organisation. "Zionism merely succeeded in creating its own version of the world from which the Jews were rejected."

No supporter of justice for Palestinians should be defensive in the least about speaking out against Zionism and the state of Israel. ■

# Israel: the terrorist state

"The young... extremists know neither toleration nor compromise; they regard themselves as morally justified in violence directed against any individual or institution that impedes the complete fulfilment of their demands."

This does not, as you might think, refer to Palestinian suicide bombers. It was written by the Officer Administering the Government of Palestine to the British Colonial Secretary in 1945. He was describing Zionist groups – Irgun, Haganah, the Stern Gang – whose terrorist actions laid the basis for the state of Israel. Former Israeli Prime Ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzak Shamir started their political lives as members of such organisations.

From the 1948 massacre of hundreds of Palestinian villagers in Deir Yassin, through a series of expansionist wars, the 1982 invasion of South Lebanon and the slaughter of refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps (overseen by current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon) and up to the horrific attacks we see today, Israel has waged a non-stop war of terror against the Palestinians.

In 1948, the UN established Israel as a Jewish state. But to create a Jewish majority required the forcible expulsion of Palestinians – most of them still in exile or crowded into refugee camps today – and the denial of their existence as a people with rights to self determination.

Nearly 500 Palestinian villages existed in the territory that came under Israeli occupation after the UN partition. In the next two years, nearly 400 of these were demolished. Israel's Law of Return allows any Jew to become an Israeli citizen. But the Palestinians who were driven out are not allowed to return.

Israel's founders bought the support of the Western powers – especially the US – with a promise to watch over their economic and strategic interests in the Middle East. The alliance between Zionism and imperialism has created a state which depends on systematic repression to survive.

But don't take our word for it. "The Intifada is the Palestinian people's war of national liberation," wrote former Israeli Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair recently in Israel's *Ha'aretz* newspaper:

"We enthusiastically chose to become a colonialist society, ignoring international treaties, expropriating lands, transferring settlers from Israel to the Occupied Territories, engaging in theft and finding justification for all these activities... We established an apartheid regime." ■

# Israel and the US: Blood Brothers



The US has always been Israel's most consistent supporter. Over the decades, the US has given more than US\$80 billion in aid to Israel, and it has also vetoed 29 United Nations Security Council resolutions condemning Israel for its illegal settlements and other violations of international law.

In 1951, the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* declared:

"Israel is to become the watchdog. ...[I]f for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible."

Thanks to the US, Israel is the fifth largest armed power in the world, and the only power in the region with nuclear weapons. All told, US military aid "represents about 26 percent of the Israeli defence budget and is crucial to Israel's multi-year defence modernisation plan." As the State Department explains, the US has "a significant interest in [an]...

economically and militarily strong Israel."

Israel gets billions more in loan guarantees, export credits and other assistance. All this support is essential to Israel's ability to build settlements, pay for soldiers and purchase the weapons that it uses to murder Palestinians.

The US sometimes makes mildly critical statements about Israel's grosser violations. For example, various US



administrations have described the settlements as "illegal," "provocations" and "obstacles to peace" – all of which is true. Yet US funds keep pouring in.

The US even felt obliged to vote for a

recent UN resolution calling on Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. But Israel has ignored similar UN resolutions with impunity ever since the 1967 war, and will no doubt continue to do so. If the US were serious, it would cut off the funds that allow Israel to conduct its genocidal campaign.

America's unwavering support for Israel is one reason why calling for United Nations intervention is futile. When Saddam Hussein ignored a UN call to leave Kuwait in 1990, the full military might of the West, led by the US, descended on Iraq and devastated the country – indeed, sanctions and bombings continue to this day. Israel, however, can be sure that no such fate will befall it.

Bush is preparing for a war against Iraq – ostensibly because Saddam Hussein's regime is developing "weapons of mass destruction." Yet the US lavishes billions on Israel in violation of a US law banning military assistance to governments that refuse to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and allow inspection of its nuclear facilities – which Israel refuses to do.

United Nations interventions in recent years – in the Gulf, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and East Timor – provide ample evidence that the UN is a tool for the great powers, and especially the US, to continue their domination of the world. ■

Tess Lee Ack & Rick Kuhn



(Top) A Palestinian child and  
(Above and Left) Israeli tanks in the ruins of Jenin



# Why the "Peace Process" meant war

The second Palestinian Intifada that began in October 2000 reflected the rage of ordinary Palestinians at the futility of the "peace process," negotiated between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and overseen by the United States.

In 1988, the PLO, in an act of desperation, gave up its goal of a democratic secular state of Palestine in favour of the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The PLO's previous strategy was then in tatters. That strategy had sought to combine guerrilla warfare and diplomacy, both of which relied on keeping onside with oppressive Arab regimes. Yet the Palestinians have repeatedly been betrayed by these supposed friends.

In the 1960s the PLO developed a military force in Jordan, based in Palestinian refugee camps. They were destroyed or driven out by the Jordanian government in 1970. During the 1970s, the Palestinians became a major political force in Lebanon. Syrian troops intervened to limit their influence and that of the Lebanese left. Then Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982 drove the PLO out of the country.

Fatah, the strongest organisation in the PLO, was dominated by well-off sections of the Palestinian diaspora – people like PLO leader Yasser Arafat himself, who had been a successful engineer in Kuwait. The PLO's strategy reflected their interests and those of its backers among the Arab states. The focus on guerrilla warfare and diplomacy ruled out mobilising ordinary Arabs to challenge the authority of their rulers.

The Palestinian bourgeoisie's economic wellbeing in the diaspora depends on the stability of the governments of their host countries. All of the Arab states have, at one time or another, done deals with the US or Israel. Jordan and Egypt are today thoroughly within the US orbit and have been on friendly terms with Israel. Egypt is, after Israel, the second largest recipient of US aid.

There is widespread support for the Palestinians among the masses of the Arab world. And the working class of the region, particularly in Egypt, is a large and potentially powerful force. But Arafat has never looked to it as the key ally in the struggle against Israel.

The outbreak of the First Intifada in December 1987 signalled a revival of Palestinian resistance. The conflict

increasingly demoralised Israeli troops and created divisions in Israeli society. A peace movement emerged.

The United States, Israel's economic and military backer, wanted a settlement. US influence in the region had been dramatically increased by its victory in the 1991 war against Iraq. Resolving the conflict in Palestine would consolidate its power.

Worried by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and under pressure from the Intifada, the US and Israeli governments turned to the PLO as the only current capable of negotiating on behalf of Palestinians and, they hoped, of policing the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said:

"I prefer the Palestinians to cope with the problem of enforcing order in Gaza. The Palestinians will be better at it than we were because they will allow no appeals to the Supreme Court and will prevent the [Israeli] Association for Civil Rights from criticising the conditions there..."

Arafat grasped the opportunity to come in from the cold on the back of the Intifada, which he promptly called off.

To remain on friendly terms with Israel and the US, Arafat was prepared to repress opponents of the "peace process." Far from inspiring workers in surrounding countries to oppose their own governments' repressive policies and deals with Israel, the Palestinian leadership mirrored their behaviour.

Following the Oslo Accords of 1993, the PLO, transformed into the Palestinian Authority, took over the policing of the rebellious population of the Occupied Territories. As Human Rights Watch has documented, the PA, like Israel, used arbitrary arrest, torture, violence and censorship against Palestinian dissidents. These excesses were a direct consequence of the Authority's compromises with Israel.

Arafat was caught between the Palestinian masses and Israel and the US. On the one hand, he called for an end to "terrorism" against Israel and jailed those who criticised his sell-outs and abuses. On the other, elements in Fatah organised the Intifada and even suicide attacks.

To the extent that Arafat and the PA resist Israel, we support them. But that does not mean endorsing Arafat's strategy, his "two state solution" or the even weaker

version proposed by the Saudi government, still less Bush's suggestions. While Israel exists, a Palestinian state can only be a bantustan, like those in apartheid South Africa. Its government could only hold on to power by authoritarian means and relying on Israeli support.

Arafat's approach regarded the Intifada as a mere bargaining tool in diplomatic negotiations, relied on the good intentions of US governments and refrained from challenging Arab regimes. It has failed.

The alternative is not a quick fix. But a strategy of building a broader Intifada against Israel, the US and their allies across the region could deliver justice for the Palestinians in the form of a democratic, secular state, as part of a wider settling of accounts with oppression. ■

Tess Lee Ack and Rick Kuhn



## Wellington protests in support of the Palestinian struggle

One of the most exciting developments in the capital in recent months has been the steady growth of a movement supporting the struggle for a free Palestine. Hardly a week has gone by when the Israeli embassy hasn't been picketed, or when a rally or march hasn't taken place somewhere in the city.

One rally in Cuba Mall drew well over 200 people, and a newly formed activist group on Victoria Campus, Students for Justice in Palestine, has worked hard at raising awareness of the issue and building a movement for Palestine. ■



"The most left-wing government anywhere in the world in the last 25 years."

Yeah, right.

The noxious former Nat Party health minister Simon Upton, who wrote that line, as well as some Labour enthusiasts might like to kid themselves that this has been some kind of radical left departure from the last 18 years of New Right economic and social policy disasters. But sadly both are wrong.

An overview of the Labour/Alliance coalition's major policy areas highlights this.

**Labour and the Alliance  
in government:  
The reality**

#### **Education**

- Interest on student loans written off during fulltime study; but...
- Student fees haven't been reduced by one cent, despite earlier promises by Labour to cap them at \$1,000 a year –



# **Alliance meltdown: What the hell happened?**

In the following pages *Socialist Review* asks just how "left-wing" is the coalition really, why has the Alliance fallen apart, and who should we vote for now?





and by the Alliance to eliminate fees altogether!

- Teachers forced to take strike action over their pay and conditions.

## Health

- Although the Labour/Alliance coalition has put a moderate amount of extra cash into the public health system, it has done almost nothing to reverse almost two decades of steady erosion of all aspects of healthcare.

- Waiting lists have been “reduced” by simply kicking large numbers of people off them.

## Foreign Policy

- Clark played the *Tampa* refugee affair cleverly, scoring points by taking in some of the refugees when the appallingly racist Howard gang in Australia refused to. By posing as a humanitarian, Clark managed to get Howard partly off the hook by providing a political escape route, while at the same time making herself look good – despite the fact that the refugees were included in the annual refugee quota anyway; but...

- Both Labour and the Alliance enthusiastically supported the war against the Afghan people – and the Alliance “Left” MPs never spoke out against it.

## Social Spending

- Spending on health, education and housing has increased by several hundred million dollars – *but* – taking inflation into account, social spending has effectively stood still – and is even less than the increases National implemented in the late 1990s.

## Industrial relations policy

- Nothing caused more howls of indignation from the right than the Employment Relations Act. But, as we

argued at the time, the Act was intended, like much of the current government’s policy, to adjust rather than reverse anti-working class policies. The ERA has not led to a massive strike wave – but it *has* strengthened the power of union officials over rank-and-file union members. National’s newly released industrial relations policy now promises only minor changes to the ERA, showing the ruling class’s real lack of concern over the industrial relations “revolution.”

## Nationalistaion

- Air New Zealand was not nationalised for left-wing ideological reasons but because without state intervention the country’s airline would have collapsed – a politically disastrous outcome.

- Kiwibank – one of the Alliance’s great “achievements” and a personal project of Jim Anderton – will make precious little difference to ordinary people. It is operating quite openly as a profit-making business – not a social service.

## Tax

- The Alliance once had a decent left-wing progressive taxation policy – that is until the media launched a massive campaign of disinformation, which forced the Alliance, in a classic example of the limits of reformism, into dropping it.

- The Labour and Alliance coalition has introduced a tiny tax increase for those “earning” more than \$60,000 a year – hardly a radical move.

## Overall policies

Overall it is clear that the policies of the present government, far from representing a clear break from the last 18 years of New Right attacks and a return to traditional social democratic ideals, are in fact designed to further consolidate and cement in place the neoliberal agenda. The government has tinkered with, not fundamentally reversed, these policies. Far from dismantling any of the cornerstones of the past two decades’ attacks, Labour and the Alliance have actually entrenched them still further.



## Alliance disintegrates

The sad spectacle of the Alliance tearing itself apart is a classic example of the basic problems every reformist government has faced – and therefore how ultimately they are doomed to fail. Once in power, the Alliance MPs found themselves under the same pressures all reformist politicians come under.

The Alliance repeatedly supported Labour when it voted against progressive legislation introduced by the Greens, such as the bill to reinstate the Emergency Unemployment Benefit for students unable to find work over the summer.

When Jim Anderton left the Labour

Party in 1989, he took with him thousands of the best left-wing elements – the party's activist core. Today, the activist base of his new Progressive Coalition is a bunch of former Social Creditors.

But it is very important not to see the Alliance's failure as being the failure of individual politicians. The reformist road has and always will be a dead end.

Writing about the attempts of early socialists to transform Australia's Labor Party at the end of the 19th century, Verity Burgmann wrote:

"Labor socialists who neither left in disgust nor ceased to be state [ie parliamentary] socialists, displayed a remarkable ability to find excuses for each betrayal and to assure themselves that, with a slight change in tactics in internal party politics, with getting the numbers on this vote or that, with the defeat of right-wing Labor MPs at pre-selection battles, betrayal would never again happen. The whole process happened over and over again in this period, and is still going on today."



## Who to vote for?

So, if these betrayals are inevitable, why on earth should revolutionaries still call for a vote for a reformist party like the Alliance?

Well, basically for all the same reasons that we have in the past.

Firstly, we recognise that what a tiny group like the ISO says isn't going to actually effect the election outcome. But, there is a layer of people around us – our contacts, new members,

regular magazine readers and website users – who do believe – either as active members or supporters of the Alliance – that reformist parties can bring about the things they claim to stand for.

Because of this, we want to show that we're not sectarian and we don't just stand around criticising reformists. By getting involved in real struggles and standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Alliance activists, by calling for a vote for the Alliance, we can start to have a dialogue with an increasingly

former left-wing members are likely to either drop out of politics altogether, or switch support to the Greens.

But the Greens – despite having some policies to the left of the Alliance – including opposition to the war – aren't a realistic option. The Greens, although they have many good activists as active members and although they have taken some principled stands in parliament are not an alternative for socialists to vote for. As we argued in the last issue of our magazine, the radical veneer of

the Greens – represented by the likes of Sue Bradford and Keith Locke – will, in the end, get sold out by the middle class substance of the party. The Greens are made up of a contradictory combination of young supporters and those who want to fight for workers' rights and the environment and a middle class core of professionals and small business owners.

If there *was* a much bigger revolutionary organisation in Aotearoa, with real roots in workplaces, working class communities and social movements, it would be possible to present a genuine alternative to the reformist politicians and

disillusioned layer of people around the Alliance who could potentially be won over to revolutionary politics.

Secondly, socialists have always argued that the best way to dispel illusions in reformism is for people to see the behaviour of those parties in practice. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the sad case of the Alliance! Unfortunately, because there is no realistic alternative to the left of the Alliance, most of their disillusioned

union officials. It is at times like this that illusions in a major reformist party are so completely shattered that such an organisation could draw in many former Alliance members by winning them to our ideas. By relating to mainstream left politics now, rather than standing on the sidelines criticising, we can try and build the basis of an organisation that is big enough – and has the political clarity – to win disillusioned members of reformist parties to socialist politics.

# what's wrong with "reformism"?



*Labour prime ministers (Left) Michael Joseph Savage (1935-40)  
and (Below) Norman Kirk (1972-74)*

Socialists call parties like Labour and the Alliance "reformist" because they seek to *reform* capitalism to varying degrees rather than getting rid of it through a working class *revolution*. In essence, parties like Labour and the Alliance disagree with National or ACT on how best to manage capitalism, not whether we should get rid of it altogether.

But many on the left still argue that socialists should put their energies into trying to bring about change *within* these parties, because they are mass working class organisations. At first sight it is a claim that seems to have a lot of truth in it. Certainly no other parties are in a position to make such a claim and certainly a large proportion of the working class (frequently a majority) have regularly voted for them since 1935 when Labour first came to power. It is also

the case that the Labour Party and later the Alliance were set up by, and have always retained a close relationship with, the trade

unions – which undoubtedly are mass working class organisations.

These are important facts that should not be lost sight of. They clearly distinguish Labour and the Alliance not only from the National Party – a direct representative of the ruling class – but also from the Greens, which have no such organisational connection with the working class. Because of this, when it comes to a choice between Labour or the Alliance and any of these other parties, as at a general election, revolutionary socialists will not abstain, but will call for a vote for a reformist party.

But this alone isn't enough to explain the true character of reformist parties. It is necessary also to consider the nature of these parties' programmes, their leadership, and above all their actual

practice, in order to make an overall assessment of their role.

## **Reformists in power**

In government reformist parties have repeatedly shown their preference for the priorities and requirements of capitalism over the needs of the working people they claim to represent. Again and again they have attacked strikes, raised unemployment, held down wages through incomes policies and cut spending on health and education.

[Continued next page...]



Thus in neither programme, nor leadership, are reformist parties like Labour and the Alliance "parties of the working class." Rather they are *capitalist* parties operating within the working class movement. Their role is to give just enough expression to working class discontent to contain that discontent within the structures of capitalism. They are, together with the trade union bureaucracy, a principal prop and defender of the capitalist order. Further, their membership, while large, is overwhelmingly passive.

Can reformist parties be changed into socialist parties that really represent and fight for the interests of working class people? History suggests otherwise.

For over 80 years the Labour Party and then the Alliance have been sustained by people on the left who were trying to change them. Overwhelmingly the experience has been not of them changing the Party but of the Party changing them.

Leader after leader, Savage, Fraser, Nash, Kirk, Lange, and Clark, have begun on the left and then progressed to the right, and they are only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath them are innumerable lesser figures who have been subject to the same process of gradual political corruption – "radical firebrands turned into respectable moderates" if not worse.

However it is not just experience that testifies against the possibilities of changing reformist parties, it is also any realistic assessment of the nature of those parties today.

First there is the fact that there is still very little that the party rank and file can do to control the behaviour of MPs and *nothing* it can do to control the actions of them once in government. Consequently any number of left-wing resolutions on lowering student fees or increasing social spending can be won at party conferences without the least guarantee that anything will be done about them.

The whole structure and organisation of reformist parties reflect the fact that they are essentially electoral machines, designed to elect MPs rather than advance the interest of workers and the oppressed. The bulk of the membership are passive cardholders except at election times. ■

## letters

### Dear Socialist Review,

It was interesting to read Brian Roper's account of the Greens in the last issue of *Socialist Review*. The reaction of Greens to this article was mixed to say the least. I am a member but by no means seek to represent the Green Party's views on this issue. I speak as an individual.

I hold anti-capitalist views and am inclined to agree with much of what was said in the article. However I feel that Brian Roper's perception is slightly unfair towards the Greens. The Greens have constantly been opposed to free trade and in the past have considered withdrawing support for the Government over the issue. I would also say that there is a strong understanding within the party that global capitalism is fuelling accelerated environmental damage.

The Greens have only a small representation in parliament and therefore only a small proportion of influence. It is a question of reform versus revolution. Much as we would like to see the capitalist economic system replaced with one that values things like individual welfare and environmental sustainability instead of just acquisition of wealth, it just doesn't seem likely in the near future. Change will only come gradually, through increased public awareness and a sense of cooperation between those on the left.

Personally I would like to see the Green MPs become more outspoken on these issues. I guess it's a bit like treading a tight-rope every time this popularity contest thing comes around.

Kia Kaha  
Julian Crawford  
Dunedin

# "These strikes are about our anger and frustration"

## interview with a teacher



As *Socialist Review* goes to print a wave of unofficial strikes by secondary school teachers angry at the deal negotiated by the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) secondary teachers' union are erupting over the country. Whatever way the struggle turns, these events are very significant and may point to a real shift in the industrial situation for teachers. *Socialist Review* talked to a South Island secondary school teacher, who is active in the PPTA and the International Socialist Organisation. Because of the current situation, this interview has had to be anonymous.

*Socialist Review: What is the background and focus of this campaign?*

**Teacher:** Our last dispute with the government was over money and pay. We won this, but the problems that are so pressing for secondary teachers – contact hours, workload and time – still remained. These problems still remain today, and the latest campaign was focused around them. In December the government made us an offer that conceded some of our points, as well as a small increase in money. The membership rejected this offer as insufficient and drafted a counter proposal. The central issue for teachers is *time* – we need a decent amount of non-contact time to be able to prepare lessons for our students.

*SR: What about the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)?*

**Teacher:** The government's pay "allowance" for implementing the NCEA is a farce. It's only \$1,500 – and only for three years. Once you take into account inflation this means that in three years time our pay will be *worse* than it is now! Some deal. The government are also using this to divide the membership: the allowance will only be given to those involved with directly implementing the new system, which is a ridiculous and impossible distinction to try and make in a secondary setting. They're also using the pay parity bugbear – at the moment secondary school teachers are actually paid less than primary teachers, because they settled their agreement last year. If we get an increase they (primary teachers) will have to as well – the "allowance" is a way for the government to try and get around this.



*SR: It may seem like an obvious question, but why do you think teachers are taking wildcat strike action?*

**Teacher:** These strikes are about anger and frustration. The NCEA allowance I mentioned and the pay increases are absolutely pathetic. For someone on the top of the pay scale they translate to around an extra \$12.50 a week. The issues around non-contact time and workload are ones that we've been trying to have resolved for a very long time. Anger has just built up.

*SR: Has this anger translated into opposition to the executive, the union officials, or a break with support for Labour?*

**Teacher:** That depends of course on the region and the PPTA branch you're talking about, but in general I don't think so. Education Minister Trevor Mallard is universally hated, he's reviled. It's easy to hate him because he's so offensive, but people also see through him – they've come back to us so many times with "non negotiable" offers that have improved the more we've fought back. With the executive it also depends – I think that people feel they're not doing as well as they could be, but there is still general support. I don't think you could say that they're drawing general conclusions about the role of union officials in general, or the way they're compromised by their attitude to the Labour Party though.

*SR: Where do you see the struggle going?*

**Teacher:** The PPTA executive should show some leadership. There is obviously the anger there – we need to go out on a national strike for a proper amount of time. A week long strike nationwide would push the campaign forward in a way no end of scattered wildcat strikes could. The only solution to this whole mess is sustained strike action and, to be honest, that is a worry. As a socialist it is obviously what I would support and what I will argue for, but you need to realise how much teachers have lost through individual strike days already. I lose \$137 each day I strike – unless we take a unified, concerted action we may just get worn down. That is a real worry. But I think, if we follow through with militant strike action, we can win.

*SR: Thanks for your time, and good luck in the struggle. ■*



# How much can Bush get away with?

**Anyone who still believes that George W. Bush's "War Against Terror" has anything to do with seeking justice for the victims of the September 11 attacks should read Nicholas Lemann's "The Next World Order."**

Bush's foreign policy advisers are concentrating on "how do you capitalise on these opportunities" that September 11 handed the US, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice told Lemann. September 11 "has started shifting the tectonic plates in international politics. And it's important to try to seize on that and position American interests and institutions and all of that before they harden again."

Behind this political science jargon lurks a dangerous imperial plan for US domination. The US is the world's unchallenged superpower that now feels it can openly declare itself the world's cop. Bush's advisers – and their dimwit boss – speak openly of "redrawing regional maps, especially in the Middle East" and "replacing governments by force," Lemann writes.

These imperial goals are not new to the cabal around Bush. At the end of the Cold War, this crew advocated total US global dominance to "preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future." The author of those words, an aide to Vice President Cheney during the first Bush administration is Zalmay Khalilzad, the second Bush administration's man in Afghanistan.

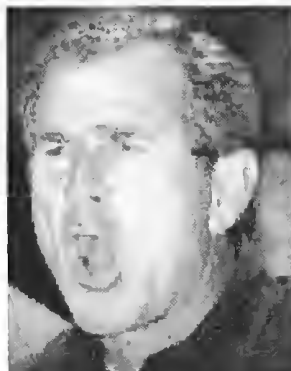
Today, they have what they've always wanted – a blank cheque for the Pentagon and a president willing to let them indulge their greatest fantasies for world domination. They have even announced a US intention to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

And they are perfectly prepared for the US to act alone to try and impose its will on the world. The administration's recent "unsigned" of its endorsement of the International Criminal Court is symbolic of this arrogance.

In Palestine, they have aided and abetted the Sharon government's war crimes against the Palestinians. With Bush cheering from the sidelines, the Israeli military

massacred hundreds of Palestinians and destroyed much of the basis of Palestinian social life. When the rest of the world reacted in horror to the slaughter in Jenin, the US collaborated with Israel to sink a United Nations investigation at the Jenin refugee camp. Adding insult to injury – and showing his contempt for world opinion – Bush called Sharon a "man of peace."

If Bush admires Sharon, it's because he's got an affinity with the old war criminal. Sharon's whole career has been based on provoking and fighting wars to extend Israel's domination over the Palestinians



and Arab regimes. Sharon is the embodiment of the Israeli view that "the Arabs only listen to force." Bush and his team believe the same – not just about the Middle East, but about the entire world.

Despite near universal opposition in the Middle East and among US allies, the US says it will go ahead with plans to invade Iraq and to topple Saddam Hussein. It's not that Saddam has anything to do with September 11 or other terrorist attacks. The administration's last hope of connecting Saddam to September 11 dissolved in May, when the CIA and the Czech government shot down longstanding reports of a meeting between a September 11 hijacker and an Iraqi agent in the Czech Republic.

The get-Saddam crowd remains undeterred. The Middle East upheaval over Palestine seems to have delayed, but not stopped, US plans for an invasion and occupation of Iraq.

For Bush, deposing Saddam means more than just silencing his father's critics or gaining a whip hand over Middle Eastern oil supplies. Like the Gulf War in 1991,

"regime change" in Iraq would signal to anyone that the US can crush any state that doesn't sign on willingly to Pax Americana.

That was the message the Bush administration tried to send Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Chavez is hardly the radical his opponents in the country's elite make him out to be. But he hasn't shown Bush and his oil industry backers the proper kind of deference. And for this, the US made a fairly open (but fortunately bungled) attempt to overthrow him in a military coup in April. Just as the US support for Sharon's war crimes in Palestine made a mockery of US pretensions to stand for "human rights," US scheming with the Venezuelan coup makers showed how little the US cares about democracy.

Bush's plans will lead to decades of wars and destruction, from Colombia to the Middle East. No doubt, they will make a repeat of September 11 more likely, not less. Moreover, the pursuit of endless war opportunities threatens to suck billions down the Pentagon rat hole and away from important social needs.

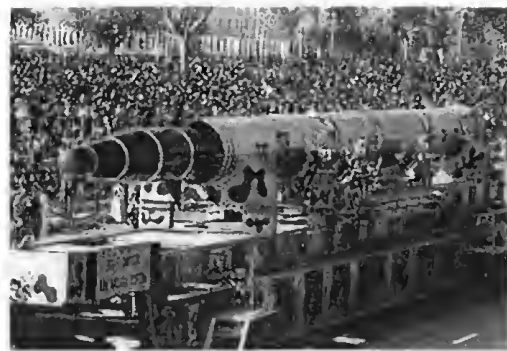
But Bush's plans can – and must – be stopped. Like the first Bush administration, this one could easily unravel. Papa Bush mistook his popularity ratings as an unqualified mandate in 1991, only to find himself out of office after the 1992 presidential elections.

This administration is mistaking its standing in the polls as a blank cheque to carry through some policies long cherished by the political right, but which are profoundly unpopular. And this is true internationally as well. It is one thing to be the world's undisputed military and economic superpower. It is another thing to mistake that as a carte blanche to bludgeon the rest of the world into submission.

This is both true of other states in the world – including major US allies – and even more so, the mass of the world's population. So while the US gave a green light to the military in Venezuela, the mass protests which followed the coup gave smug US officials a black eye. It also united all Latin American governments in denouncing US sponsorship of a military coup.

The Bush administration seems to think it has a blank cheque at home as a result of September 11. But this is not the case. The huge turnout of protesters at the April 20 antiwar/pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Washington marked an important first step. That sentiment must be organised into a growing movement to stop Bush's plans to make the world bow down before him. ■

# india and pakistan:



*Above: Pakistani nuclear missile on display*

*Below: There have already been many innocent victims in this conflict*

## nuclear nightmare in the making

India and Pakistan are both US allies in the "war against terror," according to George W. Bush. Now these countries are terrorising each other – and the world – with the threat of nuclear war. And Washington set the stage for this conflict with its power grab in neighbouring Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The US military estimates that a full scale nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan could kill as many as 12 million people immediately and injure seven million more. "Even a 'more limited' nuclear war – as measured in number of warheads – would have cataclysmic results, overwhelming hospitals across Asia and requiring vast foreign assistance, particularly from the United States, to battle radioactive contamination, famine and disease," the *New York Times* reported.

The immediate cause of the crisis was a May 14 attack on an Indian army base in Jammu, which left 30 people dead and several dozen injured. The Indian government claims that the attack was carried out by the same pro-Pakistan groups responsible for last December's assault on the Indian parliament.

But Indian politicians, led by the right-wing Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), have been preparing for a war for some time – with the epicentre in the disputed state of Kashmir, which is partitioned between Indian and Pakistani areas of occupation.

The BJP is whipping up war fever to take attention away from recent electoral defeats and anti-Muslim massacres in the state of Gujarat. But if India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee thinks he can get away with squeezing Pakistan now, it's because the US has been putting pressure on Pakistan to crack down on Islamists since September 11.

"[W]e want to tell the world community... that if there is a global war against terrorism, American forces are in Afghanistan, then how can we go on tolerating terrorist acts in our country?" Vajpayee said.

Vajpayee believes that the US will tilt away from longtime ally Pakistan in order to consolidate its new alliance with India – and keep New Delhi from reverting to its Cold War alliance with Russia.

In fact, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has bowed to Washington's – and India's – demands by abandoning support for Afghanistan's Taliban government and arresting leaders of Pakistan's top five Islamist parties, along with 2,000 activists.

Nevertheless, Pakistan's military still

has economic and political links with the Islamists. And Musharraf, who came to power in a coup, knows that if he doesn't stand up to India, the army could oust him as well.

With US soldiers "secretly" in Pakistan to hunt for al-Qaeda forces, Musharraf figures he has room to manoeuvre as well. So he ordered tests of missiles capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to several of India's cities.

Yet when asked about the confrontation over Kashmir, Bush seemed less concerned about restraining both sides than making sure that Pakistan bowed to pressure. "I'm more concerned... that President Musharraf shows results in terms of stopping people from crossing the Line of Control," he said. "Stopping terrorism. That is more important than the missile testing."

For Bush, the problem isn't a war in Asia, but a war that Washington doesn't wage for its own ends.

It's one more reason why we have to step up our opposition to Washington's war makers – and demand that the US get out of the region now. ■





## Danger and Hope – what do the French election results mean?

In the following three articles **Dougal McNeill** looks at the background to the fascist Le Pen's electoral success in France, and how the Nazis can be stopped.

*(Opposite and this page above) mass protests against the Nazis on May Day (Below) Le Pen*



### Le Pen – Le Fascist!

The French elections are now a thing of the past, and the frightening spectacle of the far right National Front coming second in the first round is a fading memory. Conservative leader Jacques Chirac has been re-elected with a massive majority. Four out of five votes were cast for him. It's back to business as usual, or at least that's the message that mainstream politicians and the media have sent. The threat of the far right – and the chances of Chirac's opponent Jean-Marie Le Pen – have supposedly been beaten off.

But this ignores the reality of the situation in France. Le Pen may have been beaten – this time – but Chirac certainly has no mandate. These elections saw the lowest voter turnout in many years, and most of those who voted for Chirac did so only to keep Le Pen out. The attitude that it is “business as usual” now is dangerous and wrong. It is precisely the “business as usual” of modern society that is the major factor in the growth of support for Nazi parties like Le Pen’s National Front.

The French elections, regardless of their final outcome, reveal a growing disillusionment with mainstream politics and a sense of anger and despair at the current state of the world. These feelings can either go to help the far right or the far left, as the mainstream politicians offer nothing more than job losses, pay cuts, cuts in social services and an ever decreasing standard of living.

The success of the revolutionary socialist left in the presidential elections should give us great hope. Taken together, the votes of the three revolutionary socialist candidates came to more than three million in the first round of the elections – more than one in ten. Also inspiring is the wave of mass

protests and demonstrations that burst out all over France after Le Pen’s success in the first round of elections was announced. These protests – which involved millions of people – showed that there is a popular hatred of far right bigots like Le Pen. The tragedy in France is that this hatred has not been turned against the Nazis effectively.

The left has failed to confront the Nazi menace. The most significant revolutionary group in France, Lutte Ouvrière (Workers’ Struggle), has refused to confront the Nazis in any meaningful way, claiming as an excuse that the National Front “do not exist in the workplace”! The French working class is now paying the price for this refusal in the National Front’s electoral success. This success will express itself in more attacks on immigrants, more racist assaults and in the Nazis gaining the confidence to spread their racist ideas much more aggressively. To learn from the French elections we need to understand what makes people support parties like the National Front. But we also need to look into history to see where the Nazis have been beaten before, and how we can do it again.



## How do the Nazis grow?

Groups like the National Front do not start winning support because of a sudden upsurge in racist ideas or because crime is supposedly spiralling out of control. They grow because they manage to feed off the deep well of bitterness and insecurity created in millions of people’s lives – unemployment, poverty, welfare cuts, more stressful work and lives, and worries about the future.

Those are the fruits of “normal” politics in which all mainstream parties pursue the same pro-business, privatising, neoliberal policies. The far right seek to scapegoat immigrants and other minorities for the failure of mainstream politicians to address these problems. Unfortunately support for them cannot be dealt with by getting rid of individual leaders. The mainstream politicians’ hypocritical response to the assassination of Dutch far right leader Pim Fortuyn shows that.

Really undercutting that support means offering a genuine alternative to people angry at the system. That alternative must turn the anger people feel onto the right targets – big business and establishment politicians.

When unemployment is



on the rise, living standards are falling and no one seems to be offering a coherent or viable alternative, it becomes far more easy for the Nazis to target groups like immigrants and "criminals" as the source of society's problems.

This gives people a chance to vent their anger at a target, but it also prevents them from seeing the real reasons why the world is the way it is. This is why right wing leaders stir up race hatred and the fear of immigrants. Although ACT in New Zealand are not a fascist party, the way they use attacks on "dole bludgers" and Māori to cover up their pro-big business, anti-worker policies is a good example of this.

To start off with parties like the National Front will normally only appeal to those who, while still feeling the stresses of the system, have no access to the collective solidarity and support of mass actions and resistance.

These people, like small shop owners and the long term unemployed, can be convinced to scapegoat immigrants and other minorities far more easily than workers, who experience exploitation by their bosses every day. But, as mainstream parties like Labour and the Alliance fail to create any real change and as union bureaucrats sell out workers' struggles, it can become possible for the far right to attract a soft layer of support amongst workers as well. To challenge racists like Le Pen we must not only show how their analysis is wrong; we need to offer an alternative solution.



(Both pages) May Day protests against Le Pen, (opposite bottom right) a poster altered to show Le Pen as Hitler

# How do we beat the Nazis?

There are three vital lessons to be learned from the history of the anti-fascist movement. Every movement that has stuck to these three principles has succeeded and, as the German workers' movement in the 1930s tragically proves, every movement that has ignored them has failed. These three lessons are *Call the Nazis by their real name*; *Confront the Nazis*; and *Don't rely on politicians or the state*. The French left needs to learn these lessons, and learn them fast, if Le Pen is to be smashed.

## 1) Call the Nazis by their real name

For years, people from across the political spectrum refused to recognise the very real threat posed by the Nazis. Until recently, very few people –



including intellectuals who write about the National Front, politicians, media and even anti-racist activists – were unwilling to call Le Pen or other members of the NF "Nazis."

But we need to be very clear that this is what they are. Le Pen, who called the Holocaust a "detail of history," wants to stir up hatred against immigrants. He wants to deny immigrants equal access to housing, health and welfare. He wants to write racism into the very letter of French law. If allowed to grow the National Front would smash the organised workers' movement,

unleash a campaign of persecution against France's immigrant communities and attack the most basic civil rights.

Calling the NF Nazis is vital because it is only by understanding what makes fascism different from other kinds of racist or reactionary movements that activists can take up the strategies to stop them.

## 2) Confront the Nazis

The National Front has grown because they have not been systematically challenged. The electoral success of the Nazis reveals their social weakness. Parties like the NF build by organising a soft layer of support around a hard core following. Direct, physical confrontation can break them by driving a wedge between the people who may agree with some of their false ideas – that immigrants will take away jobs, for example – and those murderous thugs who make up the hard core of the organisation.

Once we have driven a wedge between the hard core and the soft layer of support then the appeal and the power of the Nazis is challenged and greatly reduced. Nazi groups gain support through giving their members and followers a sense of power and purpose. If we can deprive them of this we can deprive the Nazis of their allure.

The best way to do this is through mass, militant confrontations. We need to organise all those who oppose the Nazis to break up their meetings, smash their marches and tear down their posters. In short, we need to make it impossible for them to organise or demonstrate *By Whatever Means Necessary*.

But won't this lead to more violence? Actually, the opposite is true. The rise of the National Front has gone hand in hand with more racist attacks and murders. Studies have shown that the highest proportion of racist murders occur in areas where the NF has





support. Allowing the Nazis to organise and demonstrate gives them more confidence to attack immigrants.

One of the most instructive examples of a movement successfully confronting the Nazis was in Lewisham, London in 1977. On August 13 the main Nazi organisation, the National Front, planned to march towards Lewisham, a Black neighbourhood in London. Two counter demonstrations were organised – one planned to march away from the Nazis and another, called by a socialist group (the Socialist Workers' Party) and a local defence committee for Black youths, planned to stop the National Front from marching into Lewisham. The NF were protected by thousands of police.

The 5,000 strong demonstration – uniting Black youth, veteran anti-fascists from the 1930s, socialists, Rastafarians and others – not only prevented the Nazis from gathering at their intended rendezvous, but physically blocked their path into Lewisham. The police tried to disperse the anti-Nazis, but they regrouped and pelted the fascists with sticks, smoke bombs and bottles. The victory elated the anti-Nazis and gave their confidence a tremendous boost.

Lewisham completely demoralised the hard core Nazis and totally alienated their soft supporters – a blow which they have never fully recovered from in England. It is this way that the French National Front can be stopped – not by calling demonstrations that allow the Nazis to go about their business, but by physically confronting them and smashing them.

### 3) Don't rely on politicians or the state

The politicians who govern France – especially President Chirac – have actually contributed to an environment which breeds fascism. By scapegoating immigrants and encouraging racism, conservative and social democratic politicians have made many of the Nazis' claims seem legitimate.

We cannot turn to the police to stop the Nazis either – as Lewisham showed, they will side with the Nazis and protect them. Indeed, the British police needed to get revenge for the victory of the anti-fascists at Lewisham, and got it by brutally attacking an anti-Nazi demonstration and killing New Zealand socialist Blair Peach two years later. Any laws passed to stop the Nazis meeting or marching will more

likely just be used against the left and workers' organisations.

The force that has the power to kill the Nazi menace once and for all is the working class. In the short term we can defeat the Nazis by driving them off the streets. But in order to be truly free of the threat of fascism, we need to offer a real solution to the problems that they exploit.

In other words, we need to fight them on a class basis – when the National Front attacks immigrants and blames them for unemployment, anti-Nazi activists need to counter them by fighting for more jobs and better social services for all workers. That will require building a revolutionary socialist party in France that can link together individual militants in

factories, hospitals and schools and not only lead them in fighting the Nazis, but in connecting their immediate demands with the fight for a socialist society. ■

### Further reading

On the Web, check out [www.anl.org.uk](http://www.anl.org.uk) for the British Anti-Nazi League.

Your local Socialist Review seller or International Socialists' stall should have copies of Chris Bamberg's *Killing the Nazi Menace* available for sale. This is an excellent short pamphlet about how to stop the fascists.

For those who want to look at the issue in more depth, Leon Trotsky's *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (New York: Pathfinder, 1971) is invaluable.





update

# Argentina

Since the *Argentinazo* last December (above) mass protests have continued (below left). Buenos Aires residents at a neighbourhood Popular Assembly (below right)



Argentina's President Eduardo Duhalde almost lost his job in April when every member of his cabinet resigned. The ministers quit after Economy Minister Jorge Remes Lenicov was forced to resign following unsuccessful

negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to get the global loan sharks to ease harsh conditions for granting Argentina a US\$12 billion loan.

Duhalde was able to cobble together a "new" plan for dealing with Argentina's disastrous economic crisis – apparently putting off for the moment the threat that he might go, too.

Argentina is immersed in its worst economic crisis ever. Mass unemployment and hunger led to the huge protests last December – known as the *Argentinazo* – that forced out both the elected President Fernando de la Rúa and his successor.

Since Duhalde took over, the crisis has only grown worse. Official unemployment has topped 23 percent, while inflation is running at nearly 30 percent. The health care system has collapsed. Most hospitals are virtually closed – for lack of supplies and because the staff haven't been paid. The education system is now meeting the same fate – with teachers who haven't been paid in months. In the province of Buenos Aires alone, an estimated 150,000 children dropped out of school in March.

Remes Lenicov's fate was sealed by the failure of Argentina's Congress to approve the so-called Boncx Plan –

a scheme for the government to effectively confiscate US\$29 billion worth of savings held in banks, and turn the money into bonds that would be paid back over time. The Congress shied away from approving the measure, out of fear that the country would erupt.

Ordinary people's savings would lose as much as 70 to 80 percent of their value – on top of the 40 percent already lost due to the devaluation of the peso. The Boncx Plan was basically written by Argentina's banks, which are on the verge of collapse, as a desperate bid for a bailout.

Duhalde would have gone the same way as the Boncx Plan, but he was saved by a last minute deal with provincial governors that allowed him to remain in power as long as he continued to faithfully obey IMF requirements.

But this is a recipe for making Argentina's desperate crisis that much worse. After all, the IMF considers Duhalde's austerity measures insufficient. In spite of 23 percent unemployment, Washington believes that an additional 348,000 public employees should be laid off.

Ordinary people haven't taken this onslaught lying down. Protests over all sorts of issues have continued to erupt across the country. Argentina is becoming increasingly ungovernable. The building where Congress meets has been surrounded by a fence to keep out protesters – who have now replaced the pots and pans from the *cacerolazos* of December with wrenches to smack at the fence.



Hunger is pushing increasing numbers to take to the streets. They don't have access to their money because bank accounts have been frozen. Plus, inflation has made food much more expensive. And on top of it all, shops are refusing to accept credit or debit cards – for fear that the banks will collapse.

That's why hundreds of people in places like Buenos Aires, Chaco, Córdoba and Neuquén have again started to surround supermarkets, demanding food bags – the very actions that signalled the start of the *Argentinazo* last December.

In the province of Río Negro, thousands of teachers and state workers who are owed months of back wages fought police to enter the legislative building. Likewise, state workers in the province of San Juan defied tear gas and rubber bullets to take over the building that houses the governor's offices. ■

Héctor Reyes

# RED WORDS

## Refugee Blues

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are  
living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet  
there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it  
fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it  
there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot  
go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an  
old yew,  
Every spring it blossoms anew:  
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old  
passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,  
"If you've got no passport you're  
officially dead":  
But we are still alive, my dear, but we  
are still alive.

Went to a committee, they offered me a  
chair;  
Asked me politely to return next year:  
But where shall we go today, my dear, but  
where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got  
up and said;  
"If we let them in, they will steal our  
daily bread":  
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he  
was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in  
the sky;  
It was Hitler over Europe saying, "They  
must die":  
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were  
in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a  
pin,  
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:  
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but  
they weren't German Jews.

Went down to the harbour and stood on the  
quay,  
Saw the fish swimming as if they were  
free:  
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet  
away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in  
the trees,  
They had no politicians and sang at their  
ease:  
They weren't the human race, my dear, they  
weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand  
floors,  
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:  
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one  
of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling  
snow;  
Ten thousand soldiers marching to and fro:  
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking  
for you and me.

WH Auden, March 1939

"next to of course god america I  
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh  
say can you see by the dawn's early my  
country 'tis of centuries come and go  
and are no more what of it we should worry  
in every language even deafanddumb  
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry  
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum  
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-  
iful than these heroic happy dead  
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
they did not stop to think they died instead  
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

EE Cummings, 1926

# Write to us!

We welcome your contributions.  
Please let us know about  
upcoming protests, meetings,  
conferences and other activities so  
we can advertise them and let  
others know too.  
Send in reports from your  
workplace or campus.  
Remember, *Socialist Review* is  
your magazine.

Please include your name and address  
to verify authorship and send to the  
address below

# Get involved

**isonz@hotmail.com**  
[for all enquiries]

latest meeting details at  
[www.isonz.homestead.com/meetings.html](http://www.isonz.homestead.com/meetings.html)

## Auckland

Email [isonz@hotmail.com](mailto:isonz@hotmail.com) for details

## Wellington

Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm at the  
Mokai Kainga Māori Centre, Level 7, Victoria Arcade,  
44 Victoria St. (opposite Central Police Station)  
For details email us or phone Shomi or Dougal (04) 475-7133

## Christchurch

Phone Evan (03) 377-0630

## Dunedin

Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm at the Clubs & Societies  
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# just what **are** your politics anyway?

**The more observant among you may have noticed that this magazine's politics aren't quite the same as the mainstream media's. So just where do we stand? Below are some of the basic political ideas behind our magazine.**

**Socialism** Capitalism is a system of crisis, exploitation and war in which production is for profit, not human need.

Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over its production or distribution. A new society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and create a new state in which they will make the decisions about the economy, social life and the environment.

**Workers' Power** Only the working class has the power to create a society free from exploitation, oppression and want.

Liberation can be won only through the struggles of workers themselves, organised independently of all other classes and fighting for real workers' power – a new kind of state based on democratically elected workers' councils.

China and Cuba, like the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, have nothing to do with socialism. They are repressive state capitalist regimes. We support the struggles of workers against every ruling class.

**Revolution Not Reformism** Despite the claims of Labour, Alliance and trade union leaders, the structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against workers.

There is no parliamentary road to socialism.

**Internationalism** Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We oppose everything that divides workers of different countries. We oppose all immigration controls.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose imperialism and support all genuine national liberation struggles.

**Liberation From Oppression** We fight for democratic rights. We are opposed to the oppression of women, Māori, Pacific Islanders, gays and lesbians. These forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence.

All these forms of liberation are essential to socialism and impossible without it.

**Tino Rangatiratanga** We support the struggle for tino rangatiratanga.

Māori capitalists and politicians have no interest in achieving tino rangatiratanga for working class Māori. The Government and corporate warriors' approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Māori elite while doing little for working class Māori.

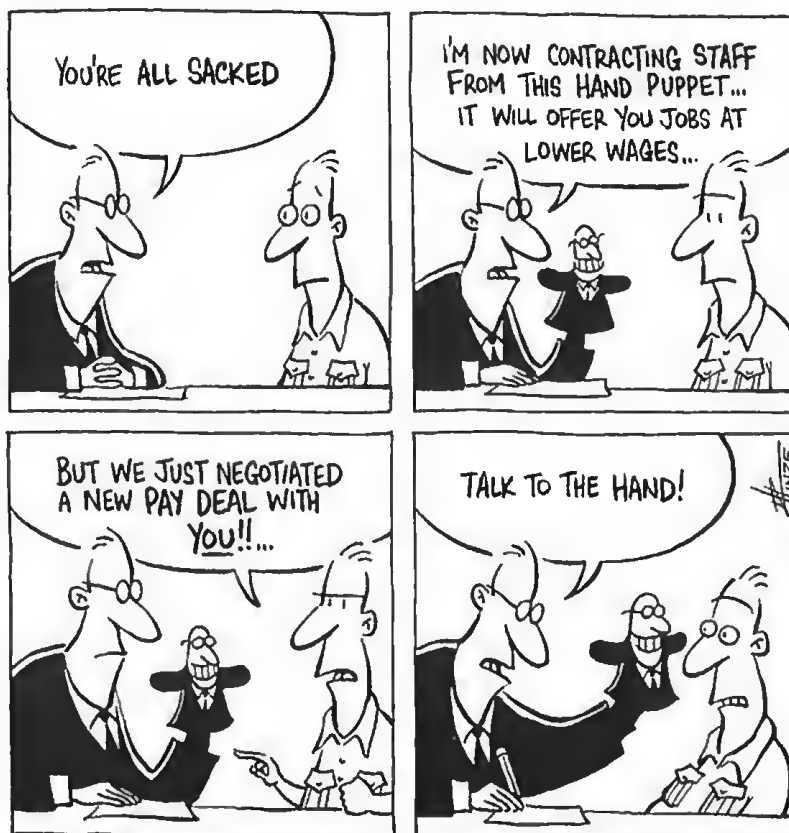
Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers' state and socialist society.

**Revolutionary Organisation** To achieve socialism, the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by day to day activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We are beginning to build such a party, linking the ideas of revolutionary socialism to workers' struggles against the system. If you agree with our ideas and want to fight for socialism, we urge you to join us.



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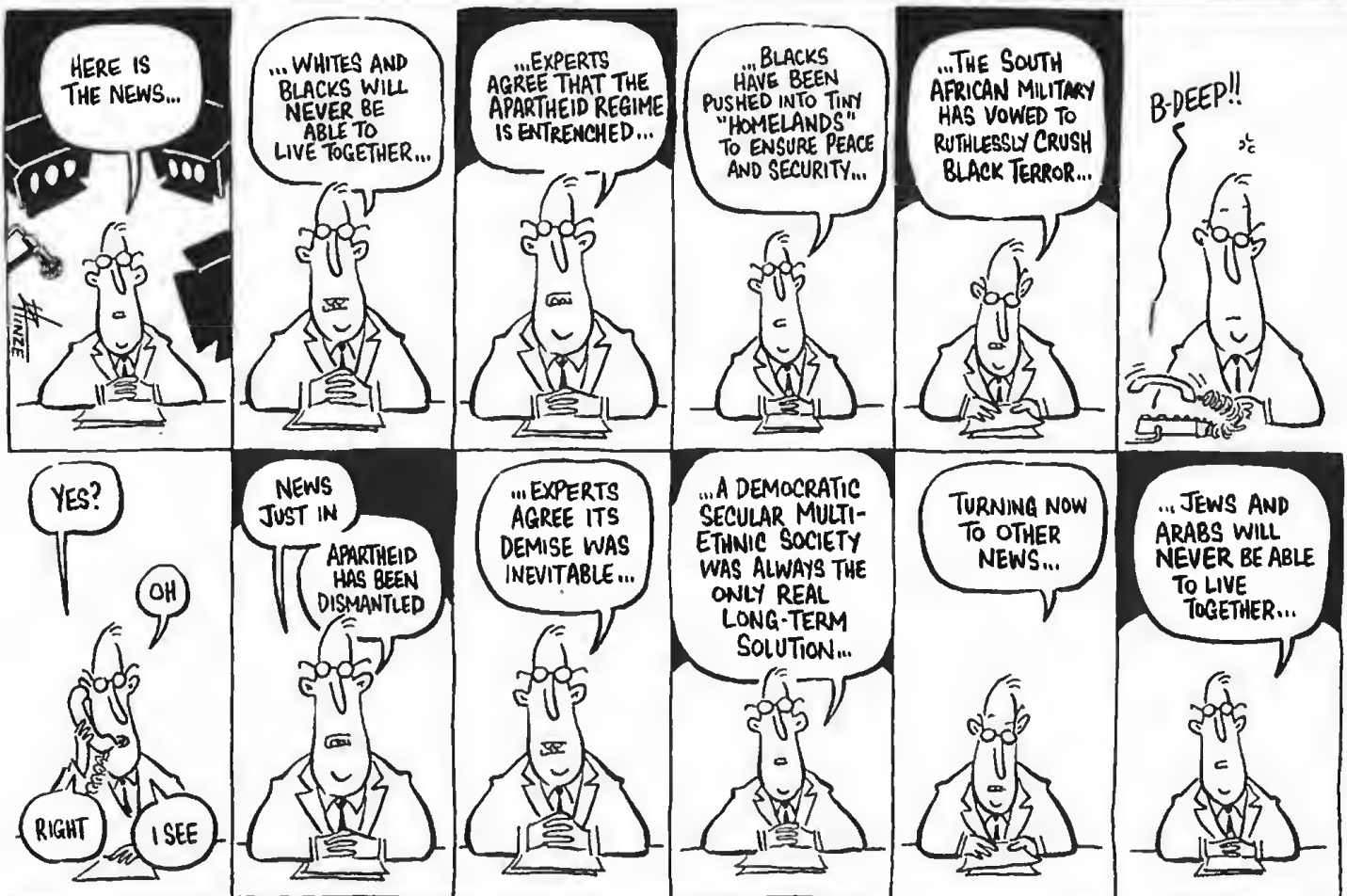
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Aotearoa/New Zealand



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